

SURVEY—NEW YORK HARBOR.

MEMORIAL AND RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,

Relative to the survey of the waters within the harbor of New York.

MARCH 11, 1844.

Read, and referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs.

Resolved, That the clerk of the common council engross a fair copy of the annexed memorial, and that his honor the Mayor be requested to sign the same when engrossed; and that the seal of the city be affixed thereto, and that the same be transmitted to the Congress of the United States, with an engrossed and certified copy of this resolution.

Adopted by the Board of Assistant Aldermen, February 12, 1844.

Adopted by the Board of Aldermen, February 26, 1844.

Approved by the Mayor, February 28, 1844.

SAMUEL J. WILLIS, Clerk C. C.

*To the honorable the Senate and the House of Representatives
of the United States in Congress assembled:*

The Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty of the city of New York, would most respectfully petition your honorable body upon the following subject of vast importance to the interests of the inhabitants in general, and mechanics of this metropolis.

The subject is a thorough and extensive survey of the waters within the harbor of New York, with the view of selecting a suitable location for the establishment of a navy-yard in which to construct arsenals, docks, slips, basins of fresh as well as salt water, and sufficiently extensive not only for present, but for the prospective purposes of the navy of the United States. The site to be so located as to be defensible in a military point of view, both on the seaboard, and from the interior of the island; with land not less in amount of acres than that contained in the yards now in use at Gosport and at Charlestown, Massachusetts, and which, at this point of time, may be obtained upon very reasonable terms, in places suitable for the object, which hereafter, from the rapid growth of the city, might not be practicable.

And while your petitioners would be heard, they would also remark, that the honorable Secretary of the Navy appointed a corps of engineers, under the direction of Mr. Sanger, to make a survey of this harbor at various

points; but limited the same for the purpose of ascertaining only the practicability of using the fresh water from the Croton aqueduct as an elevating power for a dock at New York; but not with such instructions as were necessary to cover the whole ground, and enable the engineer to make a full and suitable report—he being confined merely to the taking of soundings to the extent of a few hundred feet into the waters surrounding the island; and leaving untouched the navigation of the East river, Harlaem river, the waters of the Hell-gate, Little Hell gate, and Morrisania creek, the roadsteads sheltered by the islands of the sound, and the general advantages of an entrance from the sea by Montauk Point, and thence to this harbor, through a navigation probably safer, coming in from sea under various circumstances, than by the way of Sandy Hook—the two approaches of ingress and egress to and from the ocean.

Your petitioners would be permitted to quote the remarks of the honorable the Secretary of the Navy, contained in his report, and then follow with a few comments thereon, viz: “Mr. Sanger, the engineer of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, in compliance with a resolution of Congress is making the necessary examinations as to the practicability of using the Croton water as an elevating power for a dock at New York. When his survey shall have been completed, the department will report upon the subject.”

It has before been stated, that the instructions thus given do not cover the ground necessary to enable the engineer to give a report that would embrace the whole subject, and satisfy either Congress or your petitioners; they therefore would humbly request that a committee of Congress be deputed, clothed with ample powers to examine the subject fully and exclusively during the next recess, and directed to report at the next session of Congress, that justice may be done to the interests and future prospects of this great city, as well as those of our common country.

Your petitioners would be further permitted to state, that they are well informed and satisfied that plans are to be made and submitted to Congress, selecting the city of Brooklyn as a site for a navy-yard, having for its end the placing therein certain floats, platforms, and railways, on which to raise, ships of the line, or for building them thereon, in conformity to the caprice of certain individuals who have proposed the substitution of those fancy docks for the stable docks now used among all European nations, deeming them preferable, and at the same time cheaper. Upon these plans your petitioners will not presume to comment, but leave the subject to the good sense of Congress.

All your petitioners ask, is more particular examination of the subject, that the advantages of this island may be made known—advantages which consist of all essentials of location, regarding space and security in a military point of view, (nowhere else to be found,) ample roadsteads, fresh pure water obtained from a high elevation, and in inexhaustible quantities, for the purposes of extinguishing fires, supplying basins, floating ships and timber, and watering vessels cheaply and rapidly, or to be used as an elevating power. These advantages are all found united upon the island of New York; and your petitioners believe it to be their duty to call upon Congress to cause further investigation to be made, before deciding upon a site for an object of such vast importance to the nation generally, as well as to this city.

ROB. H. MORRIS,
Mayor of the city of New York.

NEW YORK, February 26, 1844.